

# LIVING ORTHODOXY



ST. THEODORE THE STUDITE

VOLUME VII, NO. 6; NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1985



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## THE LIFE OF OUR VENERABLE FATHER THEODORE THE STUDITE

*Whose memory the Holy Church celebrates on the 11th of November*

There once lived in Constantinople a rich nobleman by the name of Photinus, who was married to a noble lady named Theoctista. They were both pious and feared God. To them was born the blessed Theodore. His parents, enlightening him by Holy Baptism, brought him up strictly and sent him to learn to read and write. During the reign of the impious Emperor Constantine V Copronymus, the heresy of iconoclasm began to spread, and a mighty persecution was raised against the Orthodox. Consequently, Photinus, having resigned the important government post he occupied and taken council with his wife, divested himself of all his property and, turning his back on the world, dedicated both himself and Theoctista to their monastic life, in which they zealously struggled until their end. The blessed Theodore, having studied Hellenic philosophy, became an outstanding orator and a superb philosopher, and engaged the impious heretics in debate over the Orthodox Faith. So knowledgeable was he in the divine Scriptures and the dogmas, that the heretics were never able to best him.

After the death of the impious Emperor Constantine Copronymus, his son, Leo IV, the Khazar, who was also an iconoclast, came to the throne; but he did not reign long, and soon died. After him, his son, Constantine VI Porphyrogenitus, acceded to the throne, and Leo's consort, Irene, governed during the young Emperor's minority. Bearing a name which means "peace", she indeed caused peace to abide in the Church and brought an end to the discord of iconoclasm. She assembled a multitude of venerable fathers, and, with the most holy Patriarch Tarasius, convoked in Nicaea the Seventh Ecumenical Council, and when it rejected the ungodly teaching of the heretics, she re-established, as it was before, the veneration of the divine icons and the homage rendered them. More than three hundred fathers assembled for the Council; and among them was the venerable Plato, who originally had struggled in asceticism on Mount Olympus in Asia Minor. He was the blessed Theodore's maternal uncle; the Spirit of God dwelt within him, and, as a man well-read in the divine Scriptures and skilled in rhetoric, he was pleasing to all.

After the conclusion of the Council, Plato took away with him the blessed Theodore and two of his brothers, Joseph and Euthymius, who expressed the desire to receive the monastic tonsure. Withdrawing with them, he came to a certain solitary place known as Saccudio. The locale of this place was extremely beautiful and well-pleasing to those who sought stillness. Situated on a mountain, well-rounded and smooth, it was surrounded with divers lofty trees, had sweet, flowing water, and natural access to a little path. To Plato and his companions, this site was most delightful, and they made their abode there and quickly erected a church dedicated to Saint John the

Theologian. When the number of brethren began to increase, Plato built a monastery, in the year 782. The blessed Theodore, tonsured by him into the monastic rank, mortified his flesh more than others by struggles and fasting. Learning humility, he chose for himself the most onerous and menial of tasks and occupations. And it astonished many that the son of wealthy and noble parents, who had been brought up in comfort and peace, subjected himself to such severe struggles: the cutting of firewood, the bearing of water, the tilling of the ground in the vineyard, the carrying away of stones; and he fulfilled other similar tasks as well; for example, he often carried manure out to the vineyards for fertilizer. At the same time, the saint helped the weaker brethren, who were sick of body, in their labors, and was the servant of all.

He also took care to confess all his thought and deeds to his spiritual father, the holy Plato. Going to him with love, Theodore confessed and earnestly received instructions from him. He constantly set aside, from each day, a certain time for the contemplation of God, that, standing before the one God, he might perform some mystical service to Him far removed from all that is worldly and vain. Yet his virtue could not be concealed; for the very tears which streamed abundantly from his eyes were indubitable proof of his many virtues. The saint's abstinence was wonderful and judicious. He did not spurn food, nor at the same time did he burden his stomach, but he skillfully crushed the head of the serpent of vainglory; for he did not fast any more than the time established for all the brethren; but when everyone was in the refectory, he sat and ate with the others. Yet he ate very little: only enough to satisfy the most necessary bodily needs; and at the same time he strove to conceal from others his abstinence, that they might not learn that he ate almost no food and that he would not be seen by men to be fasting. Many took up this custom of his and, as much as they were able, tried to emulate it. Among those who did so were the following: Joseph, his brother in the flesh, who, because of his virtuous life, was later ordained pastor of the Church of Thessalonica; Euthymius, his other brother; as well as Athanasius, Naucratus, Timothy, and many other fasters who, following the example of the thoughts and the conduct of Theodore, made progress in the virtues. Excelling in continual struggles of prayer and divine contemplation, the blessed Theodore showed great diligence for reading soul-saving books; he assiduously read the Old and New Testaments and the writings of the holy fathers. In particular, he loved to read the works of Saint Basil the Great, which were like food for his soul, and from them he received great spiritual delight. The rules and canons for monastic life laid down by Saint Basil he kept zealously, violating not the least of their stipulations; and those who did not observe these canons, even down to the least regulation, he held to be more laymen than monks.

Seeing the blessed Theodore resplendent with so virtuous a life, the venerable Plato rejoiced exceedingly for his sake. Determined to honor the holy Theodore with the priestly rank, he journeyed with him to Byzantium, to the most holy Patriarch Tarasius, who ordained Theodore a priest, not so much with the latter's consent as by compulsion, for the blessed one, considering himself unworthy, did not wish to take upon himself such a rank, and said that it was beyond his strength. But unable to go against the will of his spiritual father Plato and the Patriarch, and most

of all the will of God, he submitted and accepted the priesthood. Afterwards, returning to the monastery, the venerable one gave himself over to yet greater struggles and labors, which are impossible to describe.

After several years had passed, the venerable Plato, becoming infirm because of his advanced and exhausting age, decided to lay down his oversight of the monastery, and desired that the blessed Theodore receive that authority after him. He often spoke of this to the latter, entreating and instructing him to relieve the burdens of his father and agree to be the community's superior. But Theodore refused the position in every way possible, preferring rather to live under the abbacy of others than to be abbot over others, maintaining that it is easier and more profitable for one's salvation to receive instruction from others than for one to instruct someone else. The venerable Plato, seeing that Theodore was not showing obedience in the matter of his desire, devised the following ruse: he lay on his bed as one ill—and indeed he really was infirm—and, summoning all the brethren, he informed them that he felt his end approaching, and then asked whom they wished to have as abbot after him, whom they considered most able for such a position. The venerable one knew that they would wish to have no one else but Theodore, for everyone loved him and revered him for his great virtues. And thus it happened: everyone unanimously replied: "Father, after thee let Theodore be abbot over us!"

Plato immediately gave all his authority over to Theodore, and the blessed Theodore was unable to oppose the wishes of all the brethren and, against his will, accepted the authority. (This took place in the year 794.) In addition, he took upon himself yet greater struggles, showing himself to be a model for all, teaching in word and deed and correcting the monks' violations of the rules; for some had become careless in observing the monastic rules, especially the vows of non-acquisitiveness and poverty. Sympathizing with such monks, the blessed Theodore hastened to make them change quickly for the better, and showed his favor also to the rest of the monks. And if any grumbled against him, he paid it no heed, for he did not listen to what they were saying about him, but was only concerned that his activity be pleasing to God. Consequently, the murmurers, coming to fear God, carried out the will of the venerable one and disclosed to him their thoughts. Regarding them with attentiveness, he gave each one treatment according to his weakness, spurring the slothful to struggle and relaxing the struggles somewhat of the more ardent, that they not grow weak under the burden of the labors they had undertaken.

It is now opportune to describe also the sufferings of the saint, which he endured out of zeal for God and the law of God, that we may see the valiant endurance of Theodore amid tribulations.

At that time, the Emperor Constantine, the son of the pious Empress Irene, having come of age, removed his mother from the throne and began to rule the Empire himself (this was in October of 790, when the Emperor was twenty years of age). Being young and profligate, he gave himself over to excess in the passions and fornication. As a result of this, he decided to put away his



consort Maria, the daughter of St. Philaret the Almsgiver, and have her forcibly tonsured a nun; in her place, he took for himself another wife, a woman by the name of Theodota, who was a kinswoman of his father. The most holy Patriarch Tarasius did not approve of the Emperor's adultery and did not wish to bless their marriage. But a certain priest by the name of Joseph, who was the steward of the Great Church, violating the laws of God and disobeying the Patriarch, agreed to perform the mystery of marriage over them. For this criminal audacity—as the following account will show—he received fitting recompense soon afterwards. The Patriarch tried in every way possible to annul this adulterous marriage of the Emperor, but he was unable, for the Emperor threatened to restore the iconoclast heresy if he forbade the marriage. Therefore, the Patriarch allowed the Emperor to remain in his wedding bond, so as not to cause the Church of Christ a much greater evil. This iniquity, which began in the imperial chambers, spread everywhere, not only to the nearby cities, but even to the far-flung borderlands. The princes and grandees who lived by the Bosphorus and among the Goths also began to do the same thing, as did the governors of the other provinces, putting away their wives and having them forcibly tonsured nuns, and choosing others in their stead, and living with them in adultery.

Hearing of this, the blessed Theodore was grieved of heart and sighed deeply over sins committed so openly, fearing that adultery would soon become the custom, that iniquity would thus take the place of law and the law of God be abrogated. Aflame with zeal for the law of God, Theodore sent letters to all the monks, informing them of the Emperor's iniquity and exhorting them to consider the Emperor excommunicated from the Church of Christ, as a violator of the law of God and scandalizer of many. Word of Theodore's zeal and boldness spread everywhere, so that even the Emperor himself learned of it, and he burned with rage against the venerable one. Yet, considering Theodore a righteous man, and one who had acquired great glory and honor among all, he did not show his wrath openly, but first tried to win him over to his side with kindness. Thus, he ordered his adulterous spouse to send a great quantity of gold pieces to the saint as a personal gift, asking his prayers for her and for her family. But the holy one would not accept the gold and drove away the emissaries as panderers to the Emperor's iniquity.

The Emperor then devised another plan: he undertook a journey to the place where the venerable one lived, affecting some necessity, but in actual fact to converse with Theodore and win him over to his side. The Emperor assumed that Theodore and the brethren would meet him and render him fitting honor; but when the Emperor passed by the monastery, neither the venerable one, nor even one of the brethren of his monastery, came forth to meet him, but, shutting themselves in, they remained in silence; and when the servants of the Emperor began to knock upon the gates, no one answered them. Then the Emperor was enraged all the more, and, on returning to his palace, dispatched immediately to the monastery of the venerable one a certain official and a troop of soldiers, ordering them to subject the saint and the other monks who were of one mind with him to divers torments, to drive them forth from the monastery with blows and send them into captivity. The emissary, setting forth, fell upon the monastery without warning and, seizing all

those who were there, beginning with the venerable Theodore, tortured them without mercy, so that bits of their bodies came away from the wounds and the ground was dyed with their blood. After these tortures, he sent the venerable one to confinement in Thessalonica, and with him eleven of the most eminent fathers in the monastery, who, suffering with the venerable one, valiantly endured captivity and tribulation with him, rejoicing that they were being subjected to torture and banishment for righteousness' sake.

The priests and monks of Cherson and the Bosphorus, hearing of the steadfastness of Theodore and the monks with him, and of their sufferings, deplored this exceedingly, and, emulating them, began also to protest against the iniquity of the Emperor and his opposition to the Church, for which many of them endured banishment.

In confinement himself, the blessed Theodore wrote to the others who had been banished for the same reason and were imprisoned, strengthening them and exhorting them not to weaken in their struggles, not to grow weary amid tribulations, but to take courage afresh and suffer for the truth. He also wrote to the Pope of Rome, informing him of how many sufferings he had had to endure at the hands of the iniquitous Emperor, and why. The Pope, for his part, answered him, praising his patience and blessing his zeal for God and his undaunted valor. And God did not delay in punishing the Emperor for his undeserved oppression of His servants: He deprived him of life and kingdom, and the wicked Emperor died an evil death. His mother and the nobles, rising up against him, put out his eyes (this was done on August 19, 797), and he died soon after from the pain.

After his death, when Irene had again ascended the throne of Byzantium, she brought everyone back from exile; the blessed Theodore was also summoned to the Imperial City from Thessalonica and, as a confessor of Christ, was honored greatly by the Patriarch and the Empress. Then the above-mentioned priest Joseph, who had dared to bless the iniquitous marriage of the Emperor, was condemned, in accordance with the canons of the holy fathers, and was deposed from his priestly rank and excommunicated from the Church. The holy Theodore returned to his monastery, and all rejoiced at his return and hastened to look upon him, taking comfort in the fact that such a zealot of the law of God, who had endured torture and exile for righteousness, was restored to his flock once again. The venerable one, having gathered together all his scattered spiritual sheep, tended them as before, leading a God-pleasing life and illumining all, like a lamp set on a lamp-stand, with his great virtues.

When several years had passed, the lands of the Greeks were invaded by the Moslems, who began to lay waste to the provinces of the Empire and annex them for themselves. Terrified by them, many then fled to fortified cities. At that time, the venerable Theodore also, declining to subject himself and his monks to voluntary sufferings, but following the words of the Prophet Isaiah: "Hide yourselves for a little season, until the anger of the Lord hath passed away" [Is 26:20], left Saccudio and went with his brethren to Constantinople. His arrival pleased the Empress and the

Patriarch: they rejoiced over him and asked him to accept the administration of the Monastery of the Studium and establish therein the best order of life.

Here it is appropriate to mention the history of that monastery. Once, there arrived in Constantinople from Rome a certain noble and influential man, who was, by rank, a patrician and a proconsul. He erected a large and beautiful church, dedicated to Saint John the Baptist, and founded a monastery next to it. Calling monks from the Monastery of the "Sleepless Ones", he asked them to live in his monastery and retain the whole of their rule. The name of this man was Studius; and from his name the monastery also received its name and became known as the Studium. Monks lived in it until the reign of the Emperor Constantine Copronymus, preserving the rule of the "Sleepless Ones". But the infamous Copronymus, who caused an upheaval in the Church of God with iconoclasm, drove all the monks from Byzantium, and emptied the Monastery of the Studium. After this infamous Emperor perished and the persecution ceased, monks began again to live at the church of the Studium, but only a few. When the venerable one came to Constantinople with his brethren, there remained only twelve monks in the monastery.

At the request of the Empress Irene and the most holy Patriarch Tarasius, the venerable Theodore took upon himself the governance of the Monastery of the Studium and began to live therein, in the year 798. Convinced that that place was suitable for monks to inhabit, he restored and expanded the monastery and assembled a multitude of brethren. And monks even from other monasteries came to him, desiring to live with him and have him for their instructor and teacher. The venerable one received all like a father and loved all sincerely. With him all were equal; he loved all without partiality and cared for all without showing favoritism. He knew that the model of the monastic life was one and the same wherever any monastic was tonsured, just as the grace of baptism is one and the same, wherever anyone is counted worthy to receive it. But corresponding to the virtues of monks there are the various rewards. And the disciples of this venerable father progressed greatly in the virtues; and since the glory of their holy life spread everywhere, many came to them at the monastery, desiring to emulate their struggles, and the number of monks quickly increased, so that there were soon as many as a thousand brethren. In view of the great number of his disciples and the impossibility of one person being able to watch over all and recognize the behavior, words and thoughts of each, the venerable one, like a second Moses [cf. Ex 18: 19-27], appointed leaders from among those monks whom he considered the most judicious, experienced and zealous to struggle in the virtues; to each of them he gave a corresponding title: to one —steward (economos); to another —ecclesiarch; to a third —overseer of the decorum of the church; etc. And the saint also composed rules as to how each of them should fulfill the obedience assigned to him, beginning with the first and ending with the last. For misdemeanors he established penances: for some, a certain number of prostrations, for others, a more intense fast; each misdemeanor had its corresponding punishment. If someone did not stay for the entire divine service, or broke dishes, or threw something away out of inattention, or was careless about what he did, or offended his brother in some way, or uttered unnecessary words with an unbridled tongue,



or laughed out loud, or did not walk meekly and humbly, or conversed in the refectory, not listening to the spiritually profitable readings, or grumbled about the food, or shamelessly and audaciously cast his gaze this way and that, or did some other such thing—upon all such brethren the venerable Theodore imposed penances corresponding to their misdeeds.

Moreover, the venerable one established the coenobitic life in his monastery, so that no one could call anything his own, but everything was held in common: common food, common garb, everything in common. The venerable one also took care that his monks did not leave the monastery often to go to the city for the monastery's needs, for he knew what dangers threaten a monk in the city as a consequence of associating with layfolk and indulging in worldly conversations. For this reason, he wished to set up workshops within the monastery for all the handicrafts. The brethren of the Monastery of the Studium began to learn the various trades: some became carpenters and builders, others trained as blacksmiths, and thus all the trades were learned. Yet even when stretching forth their hands to work, they always had the prayer of Jesus and the psalms of David on their lips. The fame of the order, regulations and rules of the Monastery of the Studium spread everywhere, and many other monasteries, not only in outlying cities, but even in far-away lands, adopted the rule of the Studium and observed it; and some retain it to this day.

The venerable one also wrote many spiritually profitable books and composed panegyrics on the feasts of the Lord and the Theotokos, honored St. John the Baptist with most beautiful hymns, composed a great many canons and *triodia* and, like a river overflowing with the waters of wisdom, gave drink to the Church of God and quenched its thirst with the streams of his teachings and hymnography.

Meanwhile, the throne of Byzantium was illegally usurped by the tyrant Nicephorus, who forcibly dethroned the pious Empress Irene in the year 802. At the same time the most holy Patriarch Tarasius reposed; and after him a virtuous man, worthy of such a rank, was elevated to the patriarchal cathedra: this was Nicephorus, who bore the same name as the Emperor. Then contention began again in the Church, for the Emperor, on his own authority, readmitted to the Church the above-mentioned excommunicate Joseph and commanded that the right to function as a priest be restored to him. The Patriarch opposed the Emperor as much as possible; but when he saw his savage rage, he feared that the whole Church would suffer at his hands cruel persecutions, as it had had to endure many evils at the hands of past emperors, and he accepted Joseph into communion, though against his will. The Emperor did this to spite the venerable Theodore, vexing him; for he knew that the venerable one would not bear this; and so it happened. Theodore denounced the Emperor as one who used violence against the Church, who with his worldly authority introduced into the Church one whom the most holy Patriarch Tarasius and all his clergy had excommunicated. The Emperor grew exceedingly wroth against the venerable Theodore and banished him to one of the islands located near the city (this took place in the year 809). And he did the same with Joseph, Theodore's brother, and with many of the other monks of the Studium.

Meanwhile, word reached the Emperor that barbarians had invaded Thrace and were laying waste thereto. The Emperor made immediate preparations for war. Yet he did not so much desire to vanquish his enemies as he did the venerable Theodore, and, when marching forth with his army against the Scyths, he sent messengers to Theodore, trying to bring him to oneness of mind with himself, by using kindness at times, at times threats. But to this Theodore replied: "O Emperor, thou must needs repent of the transgression thou hast committed and set aright that which thou hast brought to ruin; and only then shouldst thou go forth to battle. But since thou hast not done this, the all-seeing Eye now, through me, unworthy though I am, foretelleth to thee the following: Know that thou shalt not return from the path on which thou settest forth!"

The Emperor attributed no significance to the words of the saint; but grew all the more angry with him and threatened that, after his return from the campaign, he would cause the saint yet more grief. Yet Nicephorus did not return, for, in accordance with the prophecy of the holy one, he was slain by the barbarians. After him his son, Stauricius, came to the throne; but he soon died of a wound received in the war in which he participated with his father. After his death, Michael was elected to reign. He was by rank a *Curopolites* (major-domo of the imperial palace — the third highest rank in the Empire, after Caesar), and was a man truly worthy of the imperial authority, being upright and Orthodox. Having accepted the authority, he brought back from captivity the venerable Theodore and those of like mind with him, honored them with fitting reverence, and brought an end to the dissension in the Church. And Joseph was once again excommunicated from the Church as an unfit member.

Soon after this, the holy and right-laudable Plato departed to his Lord (†814). The Patriarch, hearing of his repose, went to the Monastery of the Studium with all his clergymen, and, venerating the saint's holy remains, gave him a fitting burial. After the death of Plato, his spiritual father, the venerable Theodore lived in peace with his brethren for only two years. When that time had passed, a terrible tempest struck him and the whole Church of Christ again, raised by the impious Leo the Armenian, who before had served as military commander under the pious Emperor Michael. Dispatched to the East to oppose the barbarians, he recruited a large army and rose up in his pride against his own benefactor, the Emperor Michael. Leo the Armenian won to his side all the officers and soldiers subject to him, some by promises, others by bribery, and yet others with favors; and with their support he proclaimed himself emperor. Learning of this, the right-believing Emperor Michael immediately exchanged the imperial purple for the monastic hairshirt, avoiding civil war. Leaving his kingdom to his enemy, he took up the life of a monk.

On receiving the imperial authority, Leo the Armenian first showed himself to be pious and modest, until he had established himself more firmly on the throne and gathered around him those who shared his impiety. Afterwards, he began to utter blasphemies against the holy icons and to reproach those who venerated them, calling them fools. The Patriarch reproved his impiety and entered into a debate with him concerning the holy icons on the basis of the sacred Scriptures; but

he met with no success, and only incited the Emperor to even greater wrath. Leo the Armenian, summoning all the most prominent priests, monks, the Patriarch and among them the blessed Theodore, openly revealed to them his malice, blaspheming and denigrating those who venerated the precious icons, and praising the iconoclasts. "Hath not the ancient law written by the finger of God," he said, "commanded that we not worship the work of men's hands? Thou shalt not make to thyself an idol, nor likeness of anything [Ex 20:4]? Therefore, it is not fitting to worship icons, which are the work of men's hands. How is it possible to depict on an icon Him Who is uncircumscribable, to confine the Infinite to little boards, and to call that which is depicted with colors with the name of God?"

The holy fathers disputed the empty arguments of the Emperor, that iconoclast, in every way possible, repudiating his blasphemous words, and saying: "If we begin to keep the law given through Moses fully, then our Christian Faith would be in vain, in vain would be the apostles preaching, in vain would all the divine traditions of the fathers be, and what is dreadful to say—the very incarnation of the Master, through which we have come to know His human image and have accepted the veneration of icons, honoring in icons Him Whose depiction is thereon, would be rejected!"

When the saints spoke thus, the venerable Theodore, who had a wonderful knowledge of all the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, boldly asked the Emperor: "From whence, O Emperor, hast thou conceived the idea of dishonoring the image of Christ, bringing into the Holy Church such heretical sophistry and rending its robe, which hath been interwoven with grace from on high and the teaching of the apostles and the fathers? Thou reasonest on the basis of the Old Testament, yet the new grace, which hath come through Jesus Christ, hath put an end to it. If it is necessary to preserve the Old Testament, as thou holdest, then it is also necessary to be circumcised and to keep the Sabbath, and everything else written therein. Art thou, O Emperor, not able to comprehend that the law was given for a time and for only one nation: that which came out of Egypt? With the appearance of grace, the shadow came to an end. And the law itself doth not always keep what it commandeth. Thus, it commanded not to make images and not to worship the work of men's hands, yet it set up images of the cherubim over the ark. Were not those cherubim the work of men's hands? Yet, nevertheless, they were venerated. But, when the new grace appeared, the Lord Himself depicting His face on a napkin, sent it, to Abgar, who, touching it to himself, received healing of the disease from which he had long suffered. And afterward, the holy Luke, the apostle and evangelist of the Lord, depicted the face of the Mother of God with his own hands and left that depiction for posterity. Then many wondrous miracles were worked by the image of the Savior which had not been fashioned by men's hands, and which had appeared in Phoenicia. And do not the wonderful works, revealed through other holy icons more brilliantly than the sun, show that it is fitting to render them due veneration?"

But the Emperor, paying no heed to the words of the venerable one, said: "I do not desire to depict

the invisible and unapproachable Godhead with paints" Theodore, however, retorted: "O Emperor we are not depicting the Godhead, but rather confess and believe that it is uncircumscribable. By iconography we depict the flesh which the Son of God received from us and it is this we worship and venerate."

When the venerable father said this and much else on the basis of the divine Scriptures and the traditions of the fathers, and reproved the error of the Emperor, the Emperor filled with rage, said wrathfully to the venerable one: "I know that thou always speakest thoughtlessly, and that thou art a vexatious man, prideful and opposed to everyone. Behold! even now thou art come to blaspheme and say spiteful things of me, conversing with me not as an emperor but as with one of the simple folk, for this thou deservest many tortures. But for the while I shall spare thee, until it cometh more obviously apparent that our reasoning is correct. After that, if thou wilt not submit, thou shalt receive a punishment worthy of thy foolishness and opposition."

Thereafter, the venerable fathers had nothing more to say to the Emperor, each reasoning to himself: "What can we say to a soul so depraved, which hath no desire to be healed?" But the venerable Theodore, taking up the sword of the Spirit, answered the Emperor thus: "O Emperor, understand and comprehend that it is not thy business to review and examine the decisions of the Church. It belongeth to thine authority to consider worldly affairs and govern them, but the affairs of the Church fall within the jurisdiction of the hierarchs and teachers of the Church. It is for thee to follow and submit to them. Thus, the Apostle Paul said: 'God hath set some in the Church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers [1 Cor 12:28], but not kings. And in other passages the sacred Scriptures command the teachers of the Church to govern the affairs of the Church, but not kings."

The Emperor asked the venerable one: "Wilt thou therefore drive me from the Church?" To this the venerable one replied: "Not I, but the traditions of the divine apostles and the holy fathers will drive thee out. Though an angel from heaven preach unto you that which is contrary to the holy Faith, let him be anathema [Gal 1:8]. If thou desirest to remain within the Church of Christ, together with those who venerate the icon of Christ, then follow the Patriarch and the honorable council with him!"

At these words the Emperor became filled with yet greater anger and drove all from his presence with dishonor. Leaving the Emperor the venerable fathers and the Patriarch surrounded the blessed Theodore, praising him with lips and soul for having opposed the tyrant manfully and put him mightily to shame with great prudence, boldly denouncing his impiety.

When they dispersed to their homes, an order was issued by the prefect of the city, "that no one converse or dispute concerning the Faith, but that everyone do as the Emperor commanded." And emissaries with this message came also to the blessed Theodore. But he, on hearing this decree,

replied to them. "Judge ye yourselves: is it right to listen to you, or is it more righteous to listen to God? Better my tongue were cut out than for me to keep silent and not defend the true Faith." And the venerable one instructed all to hold to the holy Faith without wavering, calling some to himself, going to others personally, and sending letters to yet others, and thus he fortified those who were fainthearted.

He went often to the Patriarch, showing himself to be a good counsellor, and he consoled him, since he saw him to be troubled and pained of spirit. "Be not troubled, Father," he said to him; "have faith that the Lord will not abandon us. He will not permit trials which are beyond our strength and will not allow evil to prevail over us. If the enemy hath raised a persecution against the Church, still it will not be long before the tribulation returneth upon his own head. Thou knowest the word of the Lord: 'It must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh' [Matt. 18:7]. How many heresies, from the times of the apostles to the present day, have men depraved of mind raised against the Church; how many sufferings did the holy fathers who were before us endure? Yet the Church hath remained unvanquished, those who suffered have been splendidly glorified and crowned, and the heretics have received their just deserts." Hearing this, the Patriarch and all the fathers of the council took heart, and prepared themselves to endure all sufferings for the right Faith and not to submit to heresy.

When a little time had passed, the most holy Patriarch Nicephorus was deposed by the impious Emperor and banished from Constantinople, and all the Orthodox hierarchs were likewise imprisoned. Then was seen a dreadful spectacle of terrible blasphemy, which the ungodly iconoclasts made. First, they cast the holy icons to the ground, next they set them on fire, then they smeared them with excrement and committed many other enormities. Seeing such wickedness, the venerable Theodore grieved deeply and, marveling at the long-suffering of God, said with tears: "How can the earth bear such iniquity?" Yet not wishing to remain a respecter of God in secret and to lament such a disaster in silence, with the arrival of Palm Sunday he ordered his brethren to take the holy icons in their hands and process around the monastery, heading the icons high over themselves and chanting loudly: "Thine almpure image do we worship, O Good One!" and other similar hymns in honor of Christ.

Learning of this, the Emperor again sent a message to the saint, forbidding him to do such things and threatening that imprisonment, wounds and death awaited him if he did not comply. The holy one not only did not cease to confirm the faithful in the veneration of icons, but grew all the stronger in his courage, openly instructing all to hold fast to the Orthodox faith and to render due honor to the holy icons. Then the Emperor, convinced that it was possible neither by kindness nor by threats to daunt the valor and zeal of the venerable Theodore, condemned him to imprisonment. The venerable one, summoning all his disciples to himself and giving them spiritually profitable instructions, said: "Brethren, let each of you save his own soul at his own discretion, for this is now a terrible time." Then, grieving and weeping, he left the brethren



lamenting over him, and, taking ship, was borne over to Apollonia and imprisoned in a dungeon in the fortress known as Metopa. Yet even there he taught all the Orthodox Faith: conversing with some orally, sending letters to others. His letters even reached the Emperor. The latter again sent a certain Nicetas, the son of Alexis, with orders to remove the saint to a more remote place known as Bonias and, having imprisoned him there in a dungeon, to keep close watch over him, that he might never converse with anyone or write anything regarding the veneration of icons. Nicetas, coming to the venerable one, informed him of the Emperor's will. The venerable one replied, "I accept this movement from place to place with joy, since I have no permanent place of residence in this life, but wherever I am taken, there is my place, for everywhere the earth is the Lord's. But I cannot refrain from teaching the Orthodox Faith, and in this I will not obey you, nor do I fear your threats."

Thus, the saint, brought to the above-mentioned place and imprisoned in a dungeon, zealously confessed Orthodoxy there as well. The Emperor, learning that Theodore was in no wise submitting to his will, burned with a mighty rage and sent the same Nicetas with the command to subject the venerable one to cruel tortures. On his arrival, Nicetas announced the Emperor's command to the venerable one; but the holy man, after listening to the proclamation, began to remove his clothing, saying "I have long desired to suffer for the holy icons!" and presented his flesh for torture. But Nicetas, being a sympathetic man, on seeing his naked flesh, which had been emaciated by fasting and incessant struggles, was moved to compunction of soul and did not dare to touch him, for he feared God: and he departed, doing no evil to the saint. The latter continued to spread his Orthodox teaching everywhere, for even the guards revered him and would not hinder him by doing to him that which they had been commanded to do if he taught anyone Orthodoxy. He also wrote to his disciples, who were scattered throughout various countries, indeed, he took particular care of them, instructing them to preserve the true confession of the Faith fearlessly, even if they had to suffer grievously a countless multitude of times. He reminded them that the transitory sufferings of this life are nothing compared with the glory which will be revealed in us in the life to come, as all true martyrs of Christ have taught. He also wrote to the most holy patriarchs: to the holy Paschal, Pope of Old Rome; to Thomas of Jerusalem, and Christopher of Alexandria, informing them in detail how the holy icons were mocked in Byzantium, how the Orthodox were confined to prisons and dungeons, and how the truth had become the victim of falsehood. And he asked their help for the Orthodox Faith. Many came to the venerable in prison, to listen to his sweet teaching, and left his presence having obtained much profit for their souls.

It happened one day that a certain clergyman of the Church of Asia Minor, who was passing by, visited the saint. This man, having listened to his teaching on the Orthodox Faith, immediately rejected the heresy of iconoclasm and venerated the holy icons. On returning home, he wished no longer to have communion with his bishop, who was a heretic. He also admonished another cleric, his friend, converted him to Orthodoxy, and deterred him from communion with the heretics. The bishop, learning that Theodore was the cause of the marked change in the conduct of

his sergeants informed the Emperor of this in a letter complaining about Theodore. The Emperor again commanded the military commander of Asia Minor to subject Theodore to the cruelest of beatings. The commander sent one of his subordinates with an order to give Theodore fifty lashes. When the officer, coming to Theodore, informed the blessed one of the reason for his arrival, Theodore removed his belt and garments, voluntarily positioning his shoulders for the strokes, saying, "I would like to divest myself of my very body by these wounds, that I might depart more speedily to the Lord with a naked soul." And the soldier, shamed by the saint, bowed down before him, asking forgiveness, and departed.

Afterwards, there came another emissary from the Emperor, a man by the name of Anastasius, a man devoid of pity and of great cruelty. Having struck the saint with his own hands and subjected him to one hundred lashes, he imprisoned him in a dungeon. And he did the same to his disciple, Nicholas by name, who always followed his instructor and shared in his sufferings. Having beaten Nicholas, Anastasius locked him up with Theodore, and gave an order to the guards to keep them on the verge of starvation, and he then departed. It is impossible to convey in words what tribulation the venerable one endured in that dark dungeon. His flesh, saturated by fasting and monastic struggles, began to putrefy and give off a stench. Moreover, the dungeon itself was full of filth and dirt. During the course of the winter, the venerable one froze in it because of the severe cold, for he did not have the essential clothing, but only tattered rags. And in the summertime, he melted in the heat, for no breeze penetrated the dungeon to stir the air. Furthermore, there were a countless multitude of vile insects and worms in the dungeon. And the guardsmen, who had received their orders with a threat, began to treat him cruelly and without mercy. They offended and reviled him, calling him a fool and the enemy of the Emperor. They threw a piece of bread to Theodore and his disciple through a little window, and gave them a little water, not regularly, but every other day, or every third, and sometimes only after several days had passed, and thus they languished in hunger and thirst. And the venerable Theodore said to his disciple, "My child, I note that these men wish to kill us, not only with many blows and this dreadful dungeon, but with hunger and thirst as well. But let us place our hope in God, who is able to feed us not by Bread alone, but by a better food, and in Whose hand every living thing is held. Henceforth let the communion of the Body of the Master serve me as food for body and soul." (The venerable one always had on him a portion of the life-creating Body, soaked with the Blood of Christ the Lord, which he reserved when celebrating the divine Mysteries, whenever he had an opportunity to do so.) "Let me partake only of this, tasting of nothing else," he said, "and let the bread and water which they give us be for thee alone. Thou thyself seest that they give us very little, barely enough for the sustenance of thy body alone, and it would be best that thou remain alive to inform the brethren of my demise, if it be the will of God that I repose here, in this confinement full of privation."

When some time had passed, He Who fills every living thing with His favor, [cf. Ps 144:16] did not leave His favorite, who was dying of terrible starvation, bereft of aid, but took thought

concerning him in this manner. A certain Imperial grandee, passing by that prison, learned about the incarceration and starvation which the saint was enduring. And God inclined the heart of the noble to pity, and he ordered the guardsmen to give Theodore and his disciple sufficient food, no longer to subject them to abuse and close confinement, but to permit them to live in a little more comfort. Thus, having obtained a little freedom from the many tribulations described above, with the blessing of God, they grew stronger of body. Yet even afterwards, the holy father continued to be plagued with many misfortunes, for he developed a sickness of the stomach, and contracted a mighty affliction. Thus the holy favorites of Christ lived in the dungeon for more than three years, receiving stale bread from the guards, and that with abuse and mockery. But they endured this with joy, for the sake of Orthodoxy.

They still had not managed to recover from their tribulations and pains, when they were sentenced to be subjected to new trials, even more grievous. No one knows from whence, but a certain document of the blessed Theodore fell into the hands of the Emperor, which contained a denunciation of the Emperor's impiety and instruction of the faithful in piety and Orthodoxy. Having read this document, the Emperor flared up with yet greater anger and sent to Theodore a certain pitiless commander, to show him that document and ask whether it belonged to him, and to beat him until he reached the point of death. On arriving, the commander showed the document to the blessed one, and the latter freely verified that it was his writing—his and no one else's. Then the commander immediately ordered that the saint's disciple, Nicholas, be beaten first, stretched out naked on the ground, since he had taken down the letter on Theodore's behalf. Afterwards, having had the venerable Theodore stripped also, he beat him without mercy, covered his whole body with wounds and all but broke his very bones. Leaving him barely alive, the commander again approached his disciple, Nicholas, urging him, at times with kindness, at times with threats, to refuse to venerate the holy icons. But since Nicholas remained faithful to Orthodoxy, he began to beat him again, more than before, and left him naked in the cold for a full night, that he might be subjected to a twofold torment, for it was at that time the month of February. The venerable Theodore fell ill from the cruel beatings, and survived only with great difficulty, lying like a dead man, having barely enough strength to breathe, unable to take in food or drink. Nicholas, seeing his instructor so bereft of strength, forgot about himself, though he had undergone more terrible sufferings, and concerned himself with the restoration of Theodore's health. Requesting barley water, he dampened the dry tongue of the venerable one with it and, giving him a little of it to drink, gradually brought him to full health. Perceiving that the venerable one was little by little acquiring the power to live, he began to tend the rest of his putrefying body. Many portions of his body, which had gone gangrenous, putrefied and hung completely useless, he cut away with a little knife and discarded, that the remaining flesh might be cured with greater success. And when the venerable one began to recuperate, he tended his disciple.

Meanwhile, as the saints recuperated over a period of ninety days and had still not recovered completely from their wounds, there came from the Emperor another savage and inhuman

messenger to whom it had been commanded to take Theodore and his disciple, Nicholas, to Smyrna. This emissary was avaricious and, thinking that Theodore had been given gold by those who came to him for his teaching, ordered that all the chinks between the stones of his dungeons be searched, that the walls be pulled down and the floor taken up, in the hope of uncovering this gold. But, finding nothing at all, he began to implement the Emperor's command with particular cruelty. Bringing the venerable one and his disciple forth from the prison with muckery and shoves, he turned them over to soldiers, and thus they were brought to Smyrna. The blessed one, although his strength of body had grown weak, yet, strengthened by God, kept pace with the merciless soldiers. They led him along without respite for an entire day, and at night tied him by the feet to a tree. In this manner they reached, though barely, the city of Smyrna, where they were given into the charge of a certain wicked man, a champion of ungodliness. The latter shut Theodore up in a certain deep, dark cell. With him they also incarcerated his disciple, Nicholas, and thus the blessed servants of Christ suffered together. Soon there arrived from the Emperor the above-mentioned priestess Anastasia, and the venerable one was once more subjected to a hundred lashes; the tormenter then departed. But the venerable one endured all with thanksgiving.

At that time, the military commander in the province of Smyrna was a nephew of the Emperor, who shared his heresy, and who had fallen into a terrible and incurable disease and was at his last gasp. One of his servants, who held to the Orthodox teaching, went to the sick man and told him that the venerable Theodore had grace from God to heal every illness. He then sent his servants to the venerable one immediately with the request that he pray to God for him and free him from fast approaching death. But the venerable one replied to the messengers: "Say to him who sent you: Thus saith Theodore: Remember that thou wilt answer to God on the day of thy death for thine ungodly life and for the wickedness thou hast inflicted upon the Orthodox. To thy many other requities thou hast also added the subjecting of many monks to countless tribulations and hast slain amid many torments Thaddaeus, who was great in the virtues. And lo, he now rejoiceth with the saints, but who wilt save thee from everlasting torments? At least at thine end repent of thine evildoings."

Returning, the messengers transmitted all the words of Theodore to the ailing military commander. The latter was sore afraid, thinking of the wicked deeds he had done, and he sent messengers again to the venerable one, asking forgiveness and promising to embrace the Orthodox Faith if by his supplications he would raise him up from his bed of pain. The venerable one sent to the commander an icon of the all-pure Mother of God, ordering him to keep it by his side for the rest of his life. The commander, receiving that icon, obtained relief from his pain and began to recover from death. But soon, under the influence of the Bishop of Smyrna, who was a heretic, he returned to his former heresy. Accepting from the latter some oil as a blessing for himself, he anointed himself therewith in the hope of a complete recovery. But afterward his former disease came upon him again. Learning of this, the venerable one predicted a dreadful death for the sinner, which indeed came to pass, for he soon perished, dying in torment.

The venerable Theodore, suffering in confinement, endured imprisonment in Smyrna for a year and a half. Afterwards, the infamous Emperor Leo the Armenian was put to a violent death, slain by his own soldiers, and after him Michael II the Stammerer came to the throne. This Emperor, although impious nonetheless did not subject the Orthodox to persecution, but permitted each to believe as he desired. Therefore, during his reign, all the fathers and confessors of Orthodoxy were freed from imprisonment, discharged from the prisons and brought back from exile. Then the venerable Theodore also received relief in his sufferings. There came to him certain of his former disciples, among whom were Dorotheus, who from the years of his youth had excelled in the virtues, then Bessaron, James, Dometian, Timothy, and many others who were distinguished for their pious life and ardent, unwavering love for their spiritual father, Theodore. Then arrived at Smyrna an order from the Emperor, that Theodore also be freed like the rest, and he was permitted to return to his monastery.

When the blessed one returned from imprisonment, the Orthodox from all around greeted him with joy, trying to outdo one another in inviting him into their own homes, to be counted worthy of his prayers and blessing, and to delight in his sweet teachings. The whole Church rejoiced at the return of Theodore, and everyone called him blessed, as a man who had suffered so much for the holy icons and who had confirmed all in Orthodoxy by his teaching. On the way to Constantinople, the venerable one stopped in Chalcedon to see the blessed monk Theocistus, who had once enjoyed the rank of *Magister* and having derived consolation for himself in spiritual discourse with him, he went to visit his co-sufferer, the most holy Patriarch Nicephorus, who had been sent into exile by the infamous Emperor Leo the Armenian. Having enjoyed spiritual conversation with him, the venerable one withdrew to the Monastery of Crescentius, near Nicomedia, and gladdened many with his presence, giving them spiritual guidance. Returning from thence to the Patriarch a second time, with him and the rest of the bishops he went to the Emperor and exhorted him to embrace Orthodoxy. But the sovereign, being ignorant and unlearned in the word of God, paid no heed to the speeches of the holy fathers and only said to them: "I will not forbid you to do what ye desire, only I will not permit icons to be set up in the Imperial City. Yet let anyone who desireth set them up for himself in any other place. But I do not want to worship icons."

When he said this in his folly, the venerable fathers left Byzantium. The venerable Theodore and his disciples made their abode in the Monastery of Crescentius. Somewhat later, during the rebellion instigated by a certain Thomas, who wished to appropriate for himself the imperial authority, the holy one found it essential to appear in Constantinople again with his brethren. After the war was brought to a conclusion, the saint, not wishing to live amid a people infected with the heresy of iconoclasm, again withdrew from thence. Departing from Constantinople, he did not go to the Monastery of Crescentius, but made his abode on the Promontory of Acrata where there was a church dedicated to Saint Tryphon, and there, with his disciples, he passed his God-pleasing monastic life in struggles. Living such a life with his beloved friends for a short while,



he venerable one approached his blessed end, reaching the age of sixty seven.

In the month of November before his repose, he fell prey to a severe ailment and suffered excruciating pains in his stomach. Word that the blessed Theodore was ill and at death's door spread everywhere. Then a multitude of pious Christians began to come from the Imperial City and various surrounding villages, either to delight in his final words, or to catch but a glimpse of him before he departed to God. They considered it of great profit even to draw near him: for that wondrous man was sweet of discourse, most wise in knowledge and adorned with all the virtues. When the blessed one lay on his bed and was utterly exhausted by his mortal illness, he nevertheless carried on spiritually beneficial conversations with his disciples as far as he was able. Yet it was possible to hear only a little of what he said, for his tongue was parched from the fever of his illness. Therefore, one of his scribes, seated nearby and listening, wrote down his words, that everyone who desired could read the instructions of the blessed one for the benefit of his soul. It became easier for the venerable one when he conversed, and he was even able to stand up and began to walk. Going to church on Sunday, he celebrated the Divine Liturgy, taught the brethren and ate a meal with them in the refectory. In like manner also, on the morning of the 6th of November, the feast of our holy father Paul the Confessor, he served the Divine Liturgy in church, instructed the brethren and also attended Vespers on that day. Afterwards, returning to his cell, he lay down on his bed and again felt seriously ill. He was ill for four days, and on the fifth the end of his illness arrived, but the beginning of a life without pain. When the venerable one approached his end, a multitude of the brethren assembled, and they wept over him, as for their father and teacher. Gazing at them, he shed a few tears and said: "Fathers and brethren, behold! the end of my life hath arrived. We must all drink this common cup: some sooner, others later, and we are unable to alter this hour. Lo! I am departing by the path which our fathers left, whither there is eternal life and, moreover, where the Lord and God is, Whom my soul hath loved. Him have I desired with all my heart. His servant have I called myself, although I have not completed His ministry. But do ye, my brethren and beloved children, remain faithful to my words, which I have committed to you, holding fast to the right Faith and the pious life. Ye know that I have not wearied of procuring to you the word of God, both in private and in the assembly of all. And now I earnestly entreat you, keep it in your mind and preserve it, for I am concerned for you, as one who desireth to give account concerning you. Wherefore, do ye take care that ye depart from hence undefiled. And I, if I find boldness before the Lord, do promise to pray for you, that your monastery ever remain in the best condition, and that each of you, with God's help, may have greater success in the virtues."

Having said this and bidden all farewell, he ordered his disciples to take candles in their hands and to chant the service for the departure of a soul. His disciples, standing around his bed, chanted, "Blessed are the blameless in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord" [Ps 118:1]. And when, chanting, they pronounced the words, "I will never forget thy statutes, for in them hast Thou quickened me" [Ps 118:93], the venerable one committed to God his holy soul. Receiving it, the

angels of God bore it to the throne of the Master, as is clearly revealed in the true testimony of the venerable translation of the Dalmatian Monastery.

The venerable Hieron, on the very day when Theodore reposed, i.e. the 11th of November, the feast of the holy martyr Menas, was walking in the vineyard and chanting the psalms of David as he worked. Suddenly he heard several most marvellous voices and smelled an indescribable fragrance. He was astonished and stopped, searching for the place from which this scent was emitted. Looking up into the air, he saw a countless multitude of the hosts of the angels, arrayed in white garments, shining with radiant countenances, coming forth from heaven with hymnody to meet a certain right honorable person. Seeing this, the blessed Hieron fell to the ground in great terror, and he heard someone say to him, "Behold the soul of Theodore, Abbot of the Studium, who suffered much for the holy icons and remained steadfast to the end amid tribulations, and now the soul of the departed, having triumphed, ascendeth on high, met by the hosts of heaven." The blessed Hieron informed other virtuous fathers of this vision, and they noted the day and hour of the vision's occurrence and, when some time had passed, learned that at that very hour the right-honorable Theodore the Studite had reposed and passed from earth to heaven.

Our venerable father Theodore, both during his lifetime and after his death, performed many miracles. We shall recount several of them here for the benefit of men's souls.

A certain hospitable man named Leonus opened the door of his home to the venerable Theodore, that he might rest when the latter was returning from imprisonment. Afterwards, this Leonus found a bride for his son. But lo! when the wedding was already prepared, the bride suddenly fell gravely ill and lay stricken with a high fever, so that everyone despaired of her life. Leonus sent word to the venerable one, informing him of what had happened and beseeching him to help them by his supplications. Having blessed oil, the venerable one sent it to Leonus, commanding him to anoint the ailing woman therewith. When this was done, the bride rose up immediately, restored to health, as though she had not been sick before.

And the very same Leonus, travelling alone once to some remote village on business, met a lynx on the road, which, spying Leonus, threw itself upon him, intending to tear him to pieces. Leonus called aloud the name of the venerable father Theodore, and, behold, the beast, hearing the name of the saint, stopped, dropped down to the ground, turned away from the road and ran away. And Leonus, untouched by the beast, continued on his way.

A certain woman who suffered of possession by an unclean spirit was brought to the venerable one. The spirit, which tormented her, was so fierce that she herself, feeling no pain, gnawed and consumed her own flesh. Seeing such suffering, the venerable one took pity on her, made the sign of the Cross over her head with his hand, and read over her a prayer of exorcism, and straightaway the unclean spirit left her and, driven away by the prayers of the saint, quickly vanished.

Another woman, of noble birth, related the following to the blessed Abbot Sophronius after the repose of the venerable Theodore. "There was once a fire in my house. The fire, enveloping it on all sides, burned with a mighty roar everything that was therein, and we were unable, either with water or by any other means, to repress the power of the flames, and were in doubt what to do. Then I remembered a letter from the venerable Theodore which I had on me, and which he had written to me somewhat earlier. The thought occurred to me to cast it into the fire. Would the fire not be put to shame by so much writing written by the holy hand of Theodore, and would the latter not restrain the flame somewhat? Acting upon my thought, I cast the letter into the flames and said, 'Holy Theodore, help me, thy handmaid, who am beset by misfortune!' And at that very moment we noticed that the fierce power of the fire grew weaker, died down and vanished in smoke." Such great power did the invocation of the name of this favorite of God contain!

The above-mentioned Sophronius recounts another, similar occurrence. "Nicholas, the disciple and fellow sufferer of the great Theodore, and I were going to Paphlagonia. On the way, as evening fell, we stopped in a certain field, in which lay a great deal of mown hay. In that place there were also some soldiers who, traveling the same road, had stopped in that field because of the lateness of the hour and, lighting a fire, prepared supper for themselves. Afterwards, at night, that fire flared up unnoticed and, spreading, grew into a mighty conflagration which consumed all the hay. The soldiers, awakened suddenly from sleep, all threw themselves upon us, thinking that we had set the fire, and they wished to lay hands upon us and torture us, and we, at a loss what to do, called upon the great Theodore for help, saying, 'O venerable father help us, and by thy supplications deliver us from the danger which unjustly is laid to our charge.' And when we said this, there suddenly fell a heavy rain and utterly extinguished the entire conflagration. The soldiers, seeing this wonder, became meek and, falling down before us, asked our forgiveness."

On the Island of Sardinia there was a certain pious man who, having in his possession copies of the works of the venerable Theodore, eagerly read them; he also loved the hymns composed by that holy father, which are chanted during the Great Fast, and which are known as *triodia*. Certain ungodly monks, who were passing by, stopped to visit this man and stayed with him during the Fast. Seeing the hymns and writings set down by the venerable Theodore, they began to blaspheme them, saying that they were not composed intelligently and were full of folly. That pious man who was offering them hospitality became swayed by their conversation and no longer read the beneficial teachings of the venerable one, and no longer chanted the *triodia* composed by him for Mauns as had been his custom previously. When he was thus corrupted, the venerable Theodore appeared to him one night—a man of medium stature, as he was in his lifetime, with a noble visage and a head bereft of hair. After him came other monks, holding iron rods in their hands, and the saint ordered them to beat that man who had been led astray by the impious monks. While they were beating him, the venerable one said, "Why hast thou cast aside in unbelief my writings, which before thou didst love and read? Why didst thou not consider that if the Church of God did not see any profit in them, it would not have accepted them? They have not been

composed with artfully false words, nor according to the norms of rhetorical speech, but in all things they contain salutary and humble words which are able to bring a soul to compunction of heart and contrition. They are sweet and profitable for those who truly desire to be saved." Having thus punished the sinner, the venerable Theodore departed. When the day dawned, the man lay on his bed in pain from the blows he had received, with a multitude of bruises on his body, which he showed to everyone, relating the punishment inflicted upon him. Immediately he drove from his home those monks who had led him astray as the cause of his transgressions and chastisement. From that time, he had a faith in the venerable Theodore greater than before, and read his writings and hymns with love, entreating him to forgive him his former offense.

Many healings were worked at the tomb of the venerable one. One day, there came to his tomb a certain possessed man. At night, in a vision, the venerable appeared to him and, granting him healing, returned him to full health. That man, when he rose from sleep, sensed that he had been freed from the tyranny of the enemy and glorified God and His favorite, the venerable Theodore.

A certain man ate poisoned food; the poison infected all his bowels, and he was near to death. But when he drank of from the lamp which hung at the tomb of the venerable one, he straightaway excreted the deadly poison, received health, and remained unharmed.

Another man suffered from an ailment of the stomach, but when he had looked in the vision of the venerable Theodore and called upon his name, he was healed, fully healed. Yet another man, afflicted with some great fear, was in a state of great insanity, fearing and terrified of everyone. Brought to the tomb of the venerable one and anointed with oil, he was in a moment delivered from his sufferings and, recovering his sanity, gave thanks to God and His favorite.

Many other miracles were performed at the tomb of the venerable Theodore through his supplications to the glory of the one God in Trinity, to Whom is due from us honor and worship, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Translated from the Russian by Isaac E. Lambertsen from *The Lives of the Saints in the Russian Language as Set Forth in the Menology of St. Dimitri of Russia*, Vol. II, November (Moscow: Syntaxis Press, 1962), pp. 229-261. Copyright 1985. All rights reserved by the translator.

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If a man is humble, he never thinks that he has been treated worse than he deserves. He stands so low in his own estimation that no one, however hard they try, can think more poorly of him than he thinks of himself. This is the whole secret of the matter.

*-Bp. Theophan the Recluse*

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(more on next page)



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The following leaflets are all priced at 25¢/single copy (plus P&H). Bulk prices on leaflets indicated (\*) are \$15/100; \$25/500; \$40/1000 (plus P&H). Leaflets indicated (#) may be ordered with a custom Form information imprint of 4 lines @ \$10 for each leaflet, regardless of quantity.

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 Where is the Church? (\*)  
 First Ecumenical Council  
 What is the Orthodox Church?  
 Prayer without Kneeling  
 On the Rite of Churching  
 Meaning of Christian Marriage  
 Appearance of the Cross in 1925  
 Our Living Mystical Church  
 On the Russian Church Abroad  
 Persecution & Death of Fr. Maxim Sandovich  
 Discourse in Iconography  
 The New Martyrs  
 Holy Scriptures in Orthodox World  
 Sermon on Reading Spiritual Works  
 Calendar Question  
 Is There an Invisible Church?  
 Recognizing Misfortune or Trouble Leads One to Seek  
 Deliverance (St. Tikhon)  
 Mystery of the Anointed Sovereigns  
 Summoning of 'Great Council' of the Orthodox Church  
 On Signs & Miracles (Met. Philaret of Moscow)  
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Mounted icons, heavy board, finished edges, back drilled for hanging	
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St. Bridget of Kildare, St. Kieran of Saighir	
St. Kieran of Clonmacnois	
St. Joanna the Myrrhbearer	
St. Daniel the Stylite	
St. Martin of Tours	

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## A PASTORAL EPISTLE OF HIS EMINENCE, METROPOLITAN VITALY

To the beloved pastors of our Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia and our pious flock

The ark of our Church has entered the stormy sea of life. The blows of frenzied, cruel waves now shake its entire frame to quake. The sea itself is filled with perilous, submerged reefs. We are hemmed in in every side. In the local press abusive articles directed against the Synod of Bishops are constantly appearing. The Soviets are attempting to negotiate with the Israeli government, so that, in exchange for a new Jewish emigration, it would receive all the Russian property in the Holy Land without exception, including our possessions as well. The most absurd rumors are being circulated throughout the emigration: our entire episcopate is being accused of factionalism, while at the same time they accuse us of fanaticism, intolerance and backwardness, on the one hand, revile us for supposed liberalism, infidelity to the sacred canons. They avidly watch our every step, our every move, they listen to our every word thinking to find for themselves accusations against our Church and her archpastors and pastors. In the future, no doubt, probably we can expect organized slander against the entire hierarchy and against each bishop individually. I will answer all of this slander with the words of the Holy Apostle Paul, which I cited in my eulogy at the burial of Metropolitan Philarct: "By honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report, as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (1 Cor. 4:8-10). In these words, the Apostle Paul described the characteristics of the eternal path of the true Church of Christ, and we are happy to walk this path. We give thanks to the Lord for all things: for slander and for praise, for threats and even for the coarsest abuse.

To console all the faithful children of our Church, I affirm that I am speaking the truth as before the Lord, our Chief Shepherd. Himself when I say that our entire episcopate as far as Christ and His Holy Church, we are all as unanimous and united as ever, as is our entire clergy, not differing in their efforts to labor selflessly in the field of Christ, are honorable and in concord, and the grace of the Holy Spirit has not deserted us. In His holy gift of serenity and repose of soul, inspire the sea which rages around us. Our Church enjoys internal and external freedom, such freedom as it has possessed but rarely in its entire history. Let us thank the Lord over and over again that by His almighty aid alone we are able to utilize this great gift of freedom without bending our knee to the dubious values and powers of our age. And you, our flock beloved in Christ, we ask, we beg you to intensify your struggle of prayer to keep untarnished all the days of fasting prescribed by the Church, to pray for us, your archpastors and pastors, and to trust us.

Your well-wisher and unworthy intercessor,  
+Metropolitan Vitaly

## STATEMENT OF THE CHANCERY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS

Not long ago, attacks against the ecclesiastical authorities again appeared in the press, this time in connection with the negotiations between Israel and the Soviet Union. The international press announced that the lands of the "Russian Church" would be one of the topics touched upon in the talks. Certain ill-informed persons are accusing the ecclesiastical authorities of ignoring these events.

To reassure our faithful, we submit, for their information, that the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, with the help of trustworthy individuals in the United States and in Israel, soon after receiving the alarming communication from the Chief of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem, contacted the appropriate ministries in Israel and Washington, D.C., and requested clarification in this matter.

At the present moment, the negotiations have been broken off. Furthermore, the Synod of Bishops has received the assurance that the "status quo" conceded by Israel for ecclesiastical institutions and their properties which are situated in the territory occupied in 1967 has not been altered, and that under the present conditions our Church properties, as well as the inhabitants of our monastic communities, are not in any danger.

The fortuitous coincidence of Archbishop Laurus' presence in the Holy Land also made it possible for him to establish personal contact with various governmental agencies and persons in Israel.

It should be emphasized that there has been no such panic in our convents in Jerusalem as certain "unbiased reports" have indicated; the threats served only as the occasion for intensified prayerful struggle and vigilance.

+Bishop Hilarion,  
Deputy Secretary of the Synod  
24 August 6 September 1986

## GATHERING OF THE FAITHFUL: The 1986 Orthodox Conference

Where two or three are gathered together „,“ the Lord is surely present. But it is equally true that when large numbers of people come together, united by a common purpose and love, there is a "critical mass" which may be attained, creating a deepened awareness of the common life which all pursue. It is in this sharing of life and worship that lies the true value of such gatherings of the faithful. The



Conference which formed for a few short days a greatly enlarged community of the faithful in Erie, Pennsylvania in July provided for all who would partake thereof a well-spring of encouragement, consolation, and nourishment in the Faith.



announced formal material as in the daily assemblies of the faithful for the Divine Services. Vespers in the evening, and Matins, Hours and Divine Liturgy in the morning. The services brought us together in prayer for a major portion of each day and the spirit so alive there carried over into the time spent together in fellowship at meals (which could indeed be understood as extensions of the Liturgy) and in the odd times between other functions.

None of this would have been possible without the careful preparation and truly enormous labors not just of a few people but rather of an entire dedicated Church community which for months ahead of time laid the groundwork and struggled unrelentingly in the days before and throughout the Conference to smooth the path. To make provision for a pleasant family visit is a considerable labor. How much more so to provide for several hundred people to worship, eat, sleep and study together for most of a week! The

The daily menu of lectures and panel discussions provided much spiritual food, and the sessions were without exception worthwhile and rewarding. But while this is the material of which advance flyers and posters are made, the real heart of the gathering lay not so much in the





whole Church owes an enormous debt of gratitude to the clergy and people of the Church of the Nativity for their labors and prayers.

How much so, many of the Conference participants did not realize until they arrived in Ene (and perhaps there are many in the Church who are still unaware). Early in the week before the Conference was due to convene, the Church of the Nativity burned beyond any hope of repair. A less dedicated and united community would have thrown up its hands in despair and canceled the Conference. But the Lord provided the courage and strength needed, and all went ahead as planned - with the added necessity to provide a temple for the services, and to shift functions originally planned for the community center to other locations on a few days' notice.

Under such circumstances, one would expect at best a makeshift arrangement in a sectarian meeting hall or some such space. Instead, the gymnasium in the church's community center was transformed into a soul-delighting temple, graced by many holy icons and a beautiful iconostasis. So thorough was the transformation that it was quite possible not to notice the original purpose of the space (unless one persisted in staring at the striped floor or the girdered ceiling).

It would be unfair to those whose efforts brought about such delightful results to pass by without mention of the excellent meals provided for the conferees. Yet, the quality of the food was not so significant as the spirit which pervaded those meals: that of the faithful breaking bread together in company with their pastors and chief shepherds, sharing in their meals as they had before shared in their prayers. But it may also need to be



suggested that such sumptuous fare, delightful though it is, may be not entirely appropriate to our common gatherings. So many of our brethren and of the Lord's little ones throughout the world go in want, that we must at the very least partake of such excellent food with a spirit of repentance and determination not to allow anything to go to waste. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to consider for future conferences somewhat more ascetic fare, and finding ways of using conference funds thus saved to assist those who go in want.

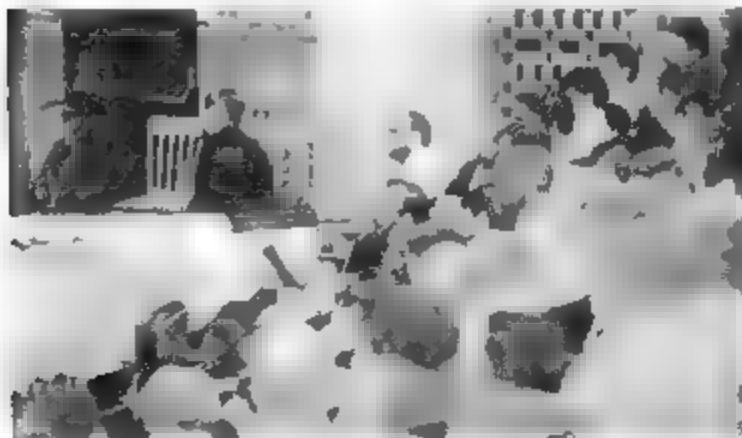
The week was marked especially by a joyous hierarchical Divine Liturgy, served by our Metropolitan, three of our bishops, and other clergy almost beyond counting. Throughout the



Conference, the services were served according to the Old Rite, and to the best of anyone's knowledge this was the first time in hundreds of years that a hierarchical service according to the Old Rite had been served by a chief

pastor of the Church. While this was certainly a moment of joy for those who for so long had suffered deprivation of the Holy Mysteries on account of the schism, it should be no less so for all of us, marking as it does with such clarity the bridge which has been opened for the healing of that schism for all who are willing to cross.

As the Conference drew to a close, it was difficult to part with so many brethren whom the circumstances of life in the diaspora keep so far apart. We live in difficult times, not the least of the difficulty is the dispersion of the faithful over such vast spaces, not just from one end of the country to the other, but indeed over the entire globe. But in this very dispersion there is consolation, for it is our mission to preach the true Gospel to the entire world, and, few in numbers as we are, we would be much less able even to begin this labor were we concentrated in just a few places.

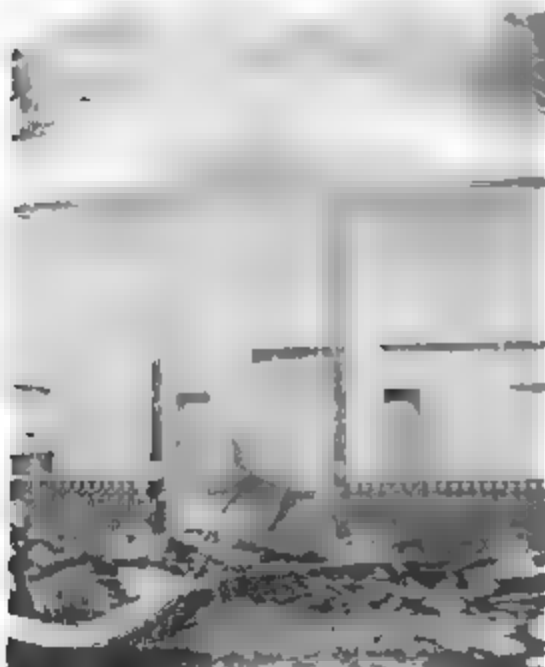


The Conference certainly provided for those who were able and willing to partake thereof much spiritual encouragement and nourishment to go away not just edified, but determined to carry forth the Good News to those who stumble about in darkness. It will have done its work if the participants return

home, not just to comfort themselves in their security in the true Faith, but to dedicate themselves with renewed vigor to living that Faith as a glowing witness and beacon for the lost souls who seek the Eternal Light.

## OUT OF ASHES...

As many of our readers will no doubt be aware, during the week before the convening of the 1986 Orthodox Conference in Erie, PA, the temple of the host Church, the Church of the Nativity, burned beyond repair. The fire completely destroyed the roof and so seriously weakened the walls of the church that demolition was unavoidable. Indeed, during the time of the Conference the walls were braced heavily to avoid a possible catastrophe.



THE AFTERMATH OF THE FIRE WHICH DESTROYED  
THE NAVE OF THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY

The circumstances surrounding the fire, however, were at the very least remarkable, if not unquestionably miraculous. The fire, which began in the roof structure, was already out of hand before anyone became aware of it. A large number of parishioners who lived nearby as well as neighborhood folk with no direct connection with the Church, assembled quickly. Despite the obvious danger, the fire officials permitted a chain of the faithful to continue removing icons from the church until the collapse of the roof was imminent, even though the smoke in the building was so heavy that no one could remain more than a few minutes, and entirely prevented access to the Altar. The alarm to clear the building sounded just as the last icon (of a formidable number as those who have visited will be aware) was removed, all except the icon directly over the Royal Gates, which could not be removed because of obstructions. Within

moments the roof collapsed and the dome came crashing to the floor.

When the heat of the rubble had finally been reduced to the point at which access was possible, Fr. Plamen entered the building, fearing that he would find all within the Holy Altar reduced to cinders or totally destroyed by water damage. To his astonishment and the awe of all present, he found that the fire had left not only the Altar, but also the icon on the iconostasis which it had been impossible to remove, untouched. All within (including priceless and irreplaceable liturgical manuscripts) was safe. The Antimens, holy Vessels, and other contents of the Altar were removed to a safe place.

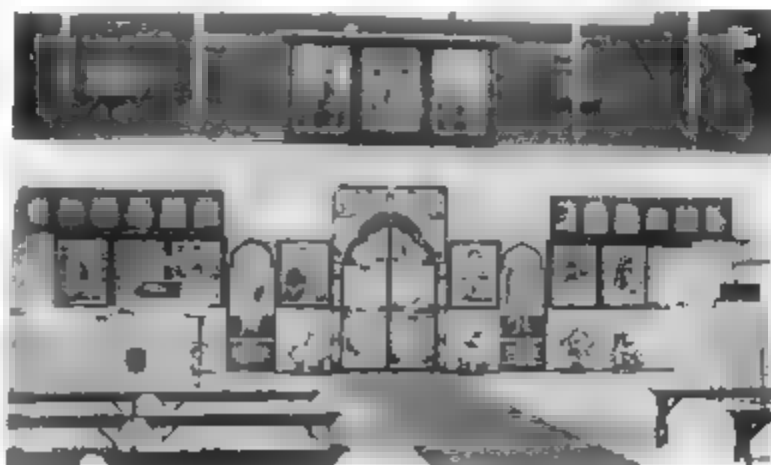


**UNDAMAGED INTERIOR OF HOLY ALTAR AFTER FIRE**

was no makeshift set-up in a secular space, but rather a true conversion. Even as the Conference was in progress, discussions were taking place concerning the manner of rebuilding, to provide not only a replacement of the old, but an even more glorious temple in place of that which was lost. The Altar itself was undamaged, but all the rest would have to be demolished and rebuilt.

As this issue of *Living Orthodoxy* goes to press (in October of 1986), word has just been received that services for the foundation of a church have been held in Erie, and that the excavating equipment is standing by waiting for improved weather conditions to begin the work. While the loss was to some extent covered by insurance, much help is needed with the cost of the reconstruction. Friends are invited and encouraged to assist as they are able, forwarding their donations to:

The Church of the  
Nativity Building  
Fund  
247 E. Front St.  
Erie, PA 16507



**TEMPORARY TEMPLE ERECTED IN THE GYMNASIUM OF THE  
COMMUNITY CENTER**

The ashes were not even cool when the congregation began making plans for the erection of a temporary church in the congregation's community center, and the conversion of the gymnasium there was complete in time for services the following Sunday. As noted in another article, the transformation was truly amazing; this



## AN APPEAL: THE FRENCH-SPEAKING MISSION IN MONTREAL

The French speaking Orthodox mission in Montréal has been active for several years now. In June 1983 it started publishing a quarterly review *L'Observateur orthodoxe* to help missionary work in the French language worldwide. The latest issue (#12) gives the full text of the great Encyclical letter of 1848, a most useful document stating the Orthodox position vis-à-vis Western denominations with great precision. *L'Observateur orthodoxe* may be ordered from the mission c/o P. Irénée Rochon, CP 605 Succ. Bourassa, Montréal, P.Q., Canada H2C 3G9. The subscription rate is \$10.00 for Canada and the U.S.A., and \$15.00 elsewhere.

With the blessing of Vladika Vitaly (now First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia), the Orthodox parish of St. Gregory the Great was founded in 1982 to make Church services available to converts in the Province of Québec.

Despite our many sins our merciful God has granted the increase and we are now in the process of purchasing a house and an adjacent large building which will serve as rectory and church. The building is currently used as a potter's studio by its owner and we very much hope that it will be possible for us to do as Jeremiah and answer the call of the Lord: "Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there thou shalt hear my words" (Jer 18:1).

This move will provide a permanent residence for our priest and greatly strengthen our mission in the Montréal area. For this reason we are now appealing to fellow Orthodox Christians for financial and spiritual support.

All donations, no matter how small, are most welcome, for it is with the co-operation of many that worthy things are accomplished. All prayers, no matter how sinful we may be, are pleasing to the Lord when offered with a humble mind. For it is He Who instructed us to share one another's burdens.

Yes, such sharing gives us strength, for "this service you perform not only meets the needs of God's people, but also produces an outpouring of grateful thanks to God, because of it many will give glory to God and so they will pray for you with great affection" (II Cor 9:2ff).

Yours gratefully in Christ,

Fr. Irénée, and the parish council.

[Donations may be sent to the address given above]

# THE 1987 CHURCH TYPICON AND CALENDAR

An English edition of the Church Typicon has been produced by the St. John of Kronstadt Press for the past three years. For 1987, it will take on a new look and a greatly expanded utility. It will include an exhaustive list of commemorations and the readings from Holy Scripture for each day of the year, as well as the typicon directions for the Divine Services for all Sundays and major feast days. An extensive bibliography of liturgical materials available in English and outlines for the basic structure of the services will be included as well. It is hoped that arrangements will be completed for the inclusion in the Calendar of saints and feasts for whom translations of the services from the Menaion are available, and the sources from which they may be obtained.

As in the past, prepublication orders will be shipped postpaid at a fixed advance price, the postpublication price may be higher, and postage and handling charges will be added. Further, as the printing will be limited in scope and no reprint practical, only prepublication orders can be assured of fulfillment. Prepublication orders will be honored until 1 December N.S. at \$10 ppd. for the first copy, \$8 ppd. for each additional copy. (Purchasers outside USA please add \$1/copy.) Prepublication orders must be prepaid.

## A PORTION OF A PAGE OF THE 1987 CHURCH CALENDAR & TYPICON (considerably reduced)

Hieromartyr Theodotus, bishop of Cyrena (\*). St. Arsenius, bishop of Tver. St. Agatho of Egypt, monk. Martyr Troadius of Neo-Caesaria. Virgin-martyr Euthalia of Sicily. 440MM slain by the Lombards. SS Sabbas and Barsanuphius, abbots of Tver. St. Sabbatius, monk of Tver, and his disciple St. Euphrosynus. GC. Martyr Hesychius the Senator. St. Countus of Phrygia, confessor and wonderworker. MM Andronicus and the virgin Athanasia. Appearance of the Kolomna Icon of the Reigning Mother of God (1917). *Repose of Abbess Philareta of Ufa 1890.*

Wed, 14th. Vespers, the priest, in a phelonion, goes to the table of fiery sword. The same, prepared the precious Cross, decorated Compine on Tues and Thurs, before covered with the Atr. On Wed of Mid-Lent Week, at the Liturgy of the Blessed is aided the utany. Ye who are ready for Illumination. *Agood, p. 137 or Liturgy of St. Gregory see bibliography)*  
Vespers. Tnod pp 35.f. Menaion for Martyr Eutropius.

### SUNDAY 2/15 MARCH

*Third Sunday of Lent  
Adoration of the  
Precious and  
Lifegiving Cross  
Ione III*

*At the Liturgy  
Heb §311 4 14-56)  
Matt §37 (8 34-9 1)*

*Wine and oil allowed*

Martyr Eutropius of Amasea, and with him MM Cleonicus and Basiliscus. Righteous Zeno and Zoilus. St. Pama, virgin, and St. Alexandra of Alexandria. St. Caluppan of Auvergne (Gaul). GC: Hieromartyr Theodoretus of Antioch.

Monday 3, 16 March  
*Sixth Hour* Isa 14 24-32  
*Vespers* Gen 8 21-9 7  
Prov 11 9-12-6  
*Fast Day*

St. Gerasimus of the Jordan (\*). MM Paul, his sister Juliana, and Quadratus. Acacius and Stratonius, at Ptolemais in Syria. St.

Tuesday 4, 17 March  
*Sixth Hour* Isa 25 1-9

## THE MORE COMMON IT IS... (continued)

There is little in common between the local radio station I sometimes listen to and *Living Orthodoxy*. Yet, just like that station tickles the attention of its listeners by asking them to identify "mystery tunes" from a few bars, a recent issue of *Living Orthodoxy* (vol. VII, No. 5) tantalizingly asks its readers to locate and check some quotations from the Holy Fathers which Fr. Gregory tells us, "neither time nor resources had permitted verifying." So here is my entry for that unusual competition.

(1) "God willed that his earth should be the common possession of all. But avarice distributed the property rights." St. Ambrose, *Commentary on Psalm 118* (8:22), PL 15:1303.

(2) "You are not making a gift of your possessions to the poor person: you are handing over to him what is his." St. Ambrose, *Treatise on Naboth* (33). The whole treatise (PL 14:731-756), recommended reading on the subject, deals with that inescapable fact of our Faith.

(3) "When someone steals a man's clothes, we call him a thief. Should we not give the same name to someone who could clothe the naked and does not? The bread in your cupboard belongs to the hungry man, the coat hanging unused in your closet belongs to the man who needs it, the shoes rotting in your closet belong to the man who has no shoes, the money which you hoard up belongs to the poor." --St. Basil, *1st Homily Against Wealth* (7). The two homilies (PG 31, 262-304) are, of course, highly recommended reading also.

(4) "Tell me, how is it that you are rich? From whom did you receive your wealth? And he from whom did he receive it? Are you able to show the justice of your possession? Of course you cannot: rather its beginning and root have necessarily come out of injustice." I have been unable to locate this quotation, attributed to St. John Chrysostom. Perusal of the recorded homilies delivered by that great Father, however, soon revealed that the citation, if genuine and accurate, is very misleading when taken out of context: presumably the saint was speaking about a specific case here, not making a general pronouncement. What stands for certain is that the idea of wealth as necessarily rooted in evil conflicts with all his teachings on the topic -- at least all of those I know of. According to his homilies, wealth is somewhat akin to human sexuality: not an evil in itself for it can be used according to God's will, but -- given human nature as it stands -- an extremely common source of sin and evil.

At that point in my reflections, I daydreamed somewhat and our local radio station came back to my mind. They often broadcast interviews with worldly celebrities. Couldn't I do the same and obtain an interview with our beloved Father among the saints? A wild request indeed, but then I remembered that I was born in this world on his feastday. So maybe the Golden-mouthed would grant me that extravagant favor? Surprise! God willing, he did! (Of course, most of the questions and all answers are word for word extracts from the saint's homilies: for those interested, this mosaic has been put together from the following sources: 50th Homily on Genesis 13th, 34th &

35th Homilies on the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, 12th Homily on the Epistle to the Philippians, 1st Homily on David's "Do not fear when a man has grown rich", 2nd Homily on Lazarus

And this is how my daydreaming secured for *Living Orthodoxy* the following exclusive interview with the great luminary of Constantinople on the subject of wealth. The more common it is

*Does the ownership of worldly goods constitute a criminal disorder?*

—These are not my views. I only see disorder in the refusal to let the poor get their share and in the evil use of wealth which the rich think themselves permitted to indulge in. God has made nothing evil, so all his works are excellent. Hence wealth, too, is no evil.

*Could you give us an example of what you mean?*

—Of course. The bright light of Elias has shone in poverty and celibacy while Abraham has found salvation amid great wealth and the impediments of a family. You have your choice: either path can lead you to heaven. I see evil only in the heart of men, of those men who are poor in virtues so that they make their earthly wealth a means to increase their spiritual penury.

*—So wealth in itself does not necessarily lead one to damnation?*

—Exactly. To avoid that frightful disaster, you have only to use it with moderation and wisdom. But if you don't take these precautions anyway, everything shall lead you to damnation: poverty just as easily as wealth. In the same fashion, Samson found perdition in matrimony, not because of the nature of that condition, but on account of the deprivation of his heart. And the five foolish virgins were excluded from heaven despite their sexual abstinence. I tell you, whatever your condition, keep spiritually awake, stay on your guard, and I answer to you for your salvation. True virtue always shines through, as the Apostle Paul himself testifies: "I know how to behave in any and every situation, whether living in plenty or in want" [Phil 4:12].

*—Do you mean that all wealth and poverty in this world come as a gift from the Lord?*

The Holy Scriptures do state that "wealth and poverty: all things come from God" [Wisdom of Sirach 11:14].

What! Wealth acquired through thefts, profanations, perjuries! Through fraud and violence! Such wealth would come from God? Far from me such blasphemy!

*Where does it come from, then?*

From sin. From iniquity. This woman became rich through prostitution: this teenager sells his youth, so-and-so gets his wealth by plundering the sacred tombs of the dead, the man next to him is a burglar, and so on. Never say again that God has given all wealth on this earth. By the way, the same is true of poverty. Take this young heir to a wealthy estate: everything has been squandered in the most shameful debauchery, in despicably idle profligacy. Where is God there?

*—Yet the Almighty permits such things*

Because He is kind and long-suffering. He wants to give each one a chance to repent. Had He acted otherwise, Zacchaeus would have had no time to repay four times his larcenies and Matthew would never have been an Apostle....

*You do not sound as if the rich were very useful*

They are not, at least those who owe their wealth to the ways of iniquity. On the contrary, those who became rich by the will of God are extremely useful. It can be seen from their works. Was it not for the benefit of the poor and the stranger that Abraham held his many possessions? The same stands true for Job. "For the stranger did not lodge without and my door was open to everyone that came. I was the eye of the blind, the foot of the lame, the father of the helpless" [Job 31:33 & 29:15-16]. Those who owe their wealth to legitimate ways know that it comes from God's liberalities. So they use it only for the aims assigned by God.

*—And what of the others?*

—Those who could only grab their wealth by offending God, offend Him again in their way of spending it, showering their money on despicable persons or burying it in the ground without letting the poor have any share of it. To deny almsgiving to the poor is to rob him. Do you find such words shocking? They are not mine, they come from the Holy Spirit. Who says through His prophet: "the land has produced her usual bounties, yet you did not pay the tithes which are due to Me: you have stolen from the poor what you have hoarded in your homes."

Do you hear the Lord? Is this not saying to the rich that their wealth is indeed the property of the poor, even though they may have received it from their father as an inheritance, or from their industry in some trade? Those who shun almsgiving are guilty of the same penalties as those who use violence to despoil their neighbor. No matter how your wealth originated, it still belongs to the Lord. God has put those possessions in your hands not to squander them in debauchery, gluttony, extravagant clothing, effeminate living and the like, but in order that you might manage them intelligently for the benefit of the poor.

*People will say that you are again preaching against the rich*

Yes, I am preaching against the thieves. They are never tired of oppressing the poor and I am never tired of censuring them. Let them leave my sheep alone. Let them leave my flock unharmed. If they attack it, why should it be a crime for me to defend it? Wolves, I throw them back, not with stones but with my words. Let me take that back. I do not throw them back, rather, I call them. Let them come, let them become sheep so that they too can join the flock. I am not fighting against them. I am fighting against the wolf. If they are no wolves, they have nothing to fear from me. If they are wolves, they have only themselves to blame.

*They say that you hate them.*

Far from it! I love them. Do you think that the Lord's commandment to love one's enemies

does not apply to me too? Actually, far from being against the rich, I speak in their favor, even though they do not understand it.

*How is that?*

I want to make them everybody's friends in this world. I want to give them unheard of goods in the next. Is this not the language of a friend? I don't hate them, I want to heal them.

*—What, according to you, is their illness?*

—Let us not talk about the numberless sins which are the usual fare of those who hunt after wealth: gauleful expedients, slandering, violence, frauds. No, let us suppose a man growing rich without falling into any of these traps. A rare and difficult feat indeed! Now tell me: if such an exceptional man uses his wealth selfishly: if he fails to hand out a generous share to the poor and the needy, shall he not dwell forever in the blazing horror of hell? The rich are in need of a physician.

*By way of conclusion, could you tell us your prescription in a few words?*

Listen: "They that want to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which cause them to sink into ruin and destruction" [1 Tim 6:3]. I beseech you, brethren, flee from wealth. Flee from it: see how humiliating its acquisition is: how degrading its ownership, often at the cost of human blood. And if wealth comes to you spontaneously, by a just and legitimate process, channel it to the hands of the poor.

Such are the very words of our beloved Father among the saints, John the Golden-mouthed, faithfully pieced together by an unworthy sinner.

Hilaire Taurand

After He has cast out the disease of vainglory, and not before, He seasonably introduces His discourse on voluntary poverty. For nothing so trains men to be fond of riches, as fondness for glory. This, for instance, is why men devise those herds of slaves, and that swarm of eunuchs, and their horses with trappings of gold, and their silver babies, and all the rest of an even more ridiculous not to satisfy any wants, nor to enjoy any pleasure, but that they may make a show before the multitude. Now before He had only said that we must show mercy, but here He points out also how great mercy we must show when He says, "Lay not up treasure. For it not being possible at the beginning to introduce all at once His discourse on contempt for riches, by reason of the tyranny of the passions, He breaks it up into small portions, and having set free the hearer's mind, insists at therein so that it will become acceptable. Wherefore, you see, He said first

—Lay not up treasure, and after that Agree with thine adversary: and after that again "if anyone will sue thee at law, and take thy coat, give him thy cloak also," but here that which is greater than all these. For here His meaning was, if you see a lawsuit impending, do this, since to want and be freed from strife is better than to possess and strive. But here, supposing neither adversary nor anyone at law with you, and without any mention of any other such party. He teaches contempt of riches itself by itself implying that not so much for their sake who receive mercy, as for the givers sake, He makes these laws. So that though there be no one injuring us, or dragging us into a court of justice, even so we may despise our possessions, bestowing them on those who are in need. —St. John Chrysostom, Commentary on St. Matthew, 6:19

## WORD FROM UGANDA

*Our erratic publication schedule and the slow delivery of mails from Africa have caused a letter from Fr Gerasimos at the mission on Bukasa Island to await publication for more than half a year. Nevertheless, we are certain that the news will be of interest to our readers, especially those who did not have the pleasure of meeting Fr Gerasimos at the 1986 Orthodox Conference. It was our joy to have had some brief time with him there, and to have since had word of his safe return to Bukasa and his work there.*

Greetings in Christ from this unworthy priest and my holy flock. We hope you are well and not suffering from the malice and envy of the world. We are reasonably well. We have started on the stone walls of the church: the foundation complete after two years. ( ) Uganda, now peaceful, is a wonderful place for a vacation, and it would be wonderful to have people with building skills come and give us a hand. As well, Father, could you ask people to help if they can with our fund at St. John the Russian [address donations to the Church of St. John the Russian, 12 Mt. Pleasant Ave., Ipswich, MA 01938] to move our ambulance boat, the "St. John the Russian", from the States to Uganda. By God's grace we have just been given a 4WD diesel Landrover as an ambulance. The donor was a Mr. Huber, from the Bavarian town of Rosenheim. He heard of our mission and also that Matushka John and Angeliki walk six miles a day to school, and plunked down the \$20,000 to get us the vehicle. Please remember him in your prayers. The war is over, the guns are for the most part silent. We have raised \$7,000 to finish the Clinic. Matushka's school has 250 students, and life goes on. ( ) Incidentally, the German Luftwaffe is flying the Land Rover in. Pray for us.

Gerasimos, unworthy presbyter  
and my holy flock

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### THE 1987 ORTHODOX POCKET PLANNING CALENDAR

Next year's edition of the Pocket Planning Calendar is now in preparation, and will again be available before the end of the year. The use of a thinner (but just as tough and opaque) paper will result in a less bulky calendar than last year. At the request of some users, consideration is being given to including therein guidance for daily Scripture readings (following the Church's lectionary). As last year, each calendar will be provided with a durable plastic jacket. (If yours from last year is good for another year, your notation to that effect on your order would be appreciated, as it would save the Press a significant cost.)

Prepublication orders will assure fulfillment and secure your calendar(s) postpaid, if placed before 15 November N.S. Such order must be prepaid, in the amount of \$3.50 per calendar. Please add \$1 for the 1st and 50¢ for each additional calendar for delivery outside USA and Canada. For orders of over 20 Calendars, please inquire.

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That we may be delivered from all tribulation, wrath  
and need, let us pray to the Lord

Lord, have mercy

Help us, save us, have mercy on us, and keep us, O  
God, by Thy grace

Lord, have mercy

Calling to remembrance our most holy, pure and most  
blessed Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin  
Mary,

one an- ПОСѢМЪ МЛТЕА СЛАВЪ МАКѢРІА  
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І ПРІКЛНЕСА САН МЛТВ СТОМУ ДУХУ  
 ІІРЮ НЕНЫ, ВІТѢШНІГАН, ДУШЕ  
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## COMMUNITY HAPPENINGS

Since the publication of the last issue of *Living Orthodoxy* there have been considerable changes at Agape Community. Most significantly, we welcomed into our midst on the Sunday of All Saints Christopher and Maria Stade and their three daughters, Katherine, Cecily (Cecilia) and Claire (Photini). Converted to the holy Faith while resident in Greece, they concluded that it was necessary for them to continue their growth in an environment and culture more familiar to them, and determined to spend some time at Agape with the hope that they might be able to settle permanently here. Be that as the Lord may will, for the present they are living at Moses House, which has long served as a guesthouse, and upon which they have made considerable improvements.

Major waterworks improvements are underway, and must be completed before severe weather is upon us. The spring which supplies our water has been discovered through excavation to be a cave of indeterminate depth and size. To this point, we have tunneled some 10' from the entrance (as far as we can go without more sophisticated means for removing material) in a crawlway just high and wide enough to admit a belly creeper passing the material back with a hoe, in two inches or so of water. The entrance has been closed with masonry and screening, and a much-improved catchment system constructed. A filtration box is in the works, and exterior work to provide a base for a 500 gallon+ reservoir underway. Still ahead of us are the formidable tasks of laying some 700' of buried mainline from the spring to the press building, as well as pumping facilities and a line for Moses House.

Interior work on the press building is also being resumed, now that the printing crisis has eased somewhat. Even though the building is far from complete, its formal blessing and dedication are set for the coming feast of St. John of Kronstadt. God willing, perhaps we can at least clean up the worst of the mess by that time!

## PRESS NOTES

For all of our good intentions, this issue again comes to you nearly a year late, but at long last the printing of the Old Rite Prayer Book has been completed. After a period of fixing leaking roofs and other such minor details, it is now possible to look upon the coming months with some hope of regularity in press production schedules, and to make to ourselves and our readers a commitment to temporarily convert *Living Orthodoxy* to a "monthly" until we are caught up sometime next spring. As previously noted, when Volume VIII is complete, there will be a major format change, and a subscription rate increase as well. Our subscribers may wish to take advantage of the present time to extend their subscriptions for up to three years (or for lifetime) at the present rates.

The coming months will be filled as well with the production of the Pocket Calendar and the Church Typicon and Calendar, as well as the reprinting of several titles which are now out of print. Nevertheless, we still expect to have available by the end of the year or early next year the long announced reprinting of "The Restoration of the Orthodox Way of Life" and the English translation of the life and suffering of the New Martyr Vladimir of Kiev. Sometime during the spring we can hope to get on to numerous other titles already on hand or in progress which are awaiting publication.

## THE SUFFERING OF THE HOLY MARTYR MYRAX

Whose Memory the Holy Church Celebrates on the 11th of December

The holy martyr Myrax was an Egyptian by birth; he was born in the city of Tanis, the child of Christian parents, and was baptized and raised in true piety. But, thanks to his own youthful foolishness, he yielded to the influence of the devil, the enemy of all that is good, and, appearing before the Emir, renounced Christ. Removing his belt and trampling the holy cross underfoot, he took a warrior's sword in his hand and, wretch that he was, cried aloud: "I am a Moslem and am no longer a Christian!"

By his apostasy, Myrax won the honor and respect of the Emir and his attendants. And much time passed before the foolish youth, who had been so captivated by vainglory, stopped to consider his salvation. Meanwhile, his parents, grieving over the fall of their son, did not despair, but fervently entreated God to restore the erring apostate to the path of piety. And their plea bore fruit. The Lord looked with compassion upon the earnest entreaties of Myrax's parents, and attended to their unceasing supplications: the grace of God illumined his heart and he repented. Then he went to his parents and said: "My respected and beloved parents! A darkening of mind came upon me and I committed a horrible deed; but now I rue it bitterly and pray that I may again become a Christian and be with you."

To this his parents replied: "Child, from the time thou becamest a Moslem we have shed many tears over thee and have prayed continually to God, that He grant thee a knowledge of the truth and turn thee to Christ again. And now we thank His goodness and compassion, that He hath not rejected our poor supplications. Yet, as thou thyself must understand, our beloved son, we are afraid to take thee in, fearing the wrath of the Emir, lest for thy sake some reprisal be directed against us. Wherefore, if thou desirest to ease thy conscience, which is weighted down by thy dreadful fall, to win the mercy of God, to keep us free from danger and to be a mediator for all thy fellow Christians, then go to the Emir and openly say to him there what thou hast said to us here in secret, as though we had no knowledge of it. May the Lord do with thee what He willeth! Go, then, our beloved child, and although we are unworthy of the mercy of our God, we trust that He will hearken to thy supplication, in that He is good."

Myrax listened to what his parents said to him and, growing brave of spirit, trusting in the efficacy of their prayers, he resolved then and there to follow their advice. Taking a belt in his hand, he went straightway to the Emir and his Moslem counsellors. When he stood before the Emir and his attendants, Myrax girded himself and, making the sign of the Cross over himself with a cross and kissing it, he cried aloud: "O Christ my Lord, have mercy and save me!" Such audacity horrified everyone, and the Emir laid hold of Myrax and said: "What hath happened to thee?" But the youth replied to him: "I have come to myself out of the diabolical darkness which had fallen upon me,

and I have turned again to Christ my God, and have become a Christian as I was before! Behold! I have come to myself and am here to confess the Lord Christ before thee and thy counsellors, and before all men, and to tell you that I abominate you and your religion!"

When he heard this, the Emir commanded that Myrax be cast into prison and, when he had been kept there for three days without food, brought to trial. In court Myrax again confessed Christ, and, when he was beaten for this, was again cast into prison. Three days later he was again brought before the tribunal and beaten further. When six more days had passed, the martyr was once more led before the court and again fearlessly confessed Christ, for which he was lashed with a scourge of leather thongs on top of the stripes inflicted on his body during his previous beatings. Then the Emir condemned him to be beheaded. The servants of the Emir took the holy confessor and, boarding a ship with him, put out some distance away from shore. There he prayed to God; then his head was cut off and he was cast into the sea. This took place in about the year 640. What happened afterwards to the body of the martyr—whether it was washed ashore by the sea—is not known; but his precious head was indeed washed ashore by the sea and was discovered by pious Christians, who took it up and cherished it as a priceless treasure. When the Emir was informed of this, those who venerated the saint paid a ransom of a hundred pieces of gold, and, receiving permission to keep without fear of confiscation the martyr's head which they had discovered, they had a silver casket fashioned for it and placed it therein with fitting honor. From that time to the present the holy head of the martyr exudes a fragrant myrrh and is the source of many healings, to the glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, rendering the Faith steadfast among those in whom doubt or any perplexity might arise concerning the holy martyr.

Translated from the Russian by Isaac E. Lambersten from *The Lives of the Saints in the Russian Language as Set Forth in the Menology of St. Dimitry of Rostov, Vol. IV (December)* (Moscow: Synodal Press, 1903), pp. 325-328. Copyright 1985. All rights reserved by the translator.

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The moon as it waxes and wanes illustrates the condition of man: sometimes he does what is right, sometimes he sins and then through repentance returns to a holy life. The intellect of one who sins is not destroyed (as some of you think), just as the physical size of the moon does not diminish, but only its light. Through repentance a man regains his true splendour, just as the moon after the period of waning clothes itself once more in its full light. If a man believes in Christ, "even though he dies, he shall live" [Jn 11:25]; he shall know that "I the Lord have spoken, and will do it" [Ezek 17:24].

—St. John of Karpathos

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## CORRECTION

In the previous issue of *Living Orthodoxy* (Vol. VII, No. 5), the translation of the "Open Letter..." of Metropolitan Innocent of Peking was erroneously attributed. The translation was done by Miss Xenia Endres, whose labors we appreciate and to whom we apologize for our error.

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## ON ENVY: From the Commentary on II Corinthians of St. John Chrysostom

I could have wished indeed to be silent; and if silence took away the disgrace of these doings, it were a gain to say nothing... For this distemper has infected the Church, it has turned everything upside down, and dis severed the connection of the body, and we stand opposed to each other, and envy supplies us arms. Therefore great is the disruption. For if, when all build up, it is a great thing if our disciples stand; when all at once are pulling down, what will the end be? What doest thou, O man? Thou thinkest to pull down what is thy neighbor's; but before his, thou pullest down thine own. Seest thou not them that are gardeners, or husbandmen; how they all concur in one aim? One hath dug the soil, another planted, a third carefully covered the roots, another watereth what is planted; another hedges it round and fortifies it; another drives off the cattle; and all look to one end, the safety of the plant. Here, however, it is not so: but I plant indeed myself, and another shakes and disturbs the plant! At least, allow it to get nicely established, that it may be strong enough to resist the assault.

Thou destroyest not my work, but thou abandonest thine own. I planted, thou oughtest to have watered. If then thou shake it, thou tearst it up by the roots and hast not that wherein to display thy watering. But thou seest the planter highly esteemed. Fear not: neither am I anything, nor thou. "For neither is he that planteth, nor he that watereth, anything;" [I Cor 3:7] to One belongeth the work, God. So it is with Him thou fightest and warrest, in plucking up what is planted! Let us then at length come to our sober senses again, let us be vigilant. For I fear not so much the battle without, as the fight within. For the root also, when it is well established in the ground, will suffer no damage from the winds. But if it be itself shaken, a worm gnawing through it from within, the tree will fall, even though none molest it. How long shall we gnaw the root of the Church like worms? For of earth such imaginings are begotten also, or rather not of earth but of dung, having corruption for their mother and ceasing not from detestable flattery that is of women.

Let us at length be generous men, let us be champions of philosophy. Let us drive back the violent career of these evils! For I see the mass of the Church prostrate now, as though it were a corpse. And as in a body newly dead, one can see eyes and hands and feet and neck and head, and yet no one member performing its proper office; so, truly, here also all who are here are of the faithful but their faith is not active; for we have quenched its warmth and made the Body of Christ a corpse. Now if this sounds awful when said, it is much more awful when it appears in actions. For we have indeed the name of brothers, but do the deeds of foes. And whilst we are called members, we are divided against each other like wild beasts.

I have said this not from a desire to parade our condition, but to shame you and make you desist. Such and such a man goes into a house; honor is paid him; thou oughtest to give God thanks



because thy member is honored and God glorified him; but thou doest the contrary: thou speakest evil of him to the man that honored him, so that thou trippest up the heels of both, and, besides, disgraceth thyself. And why, wretched and miserable one? Hast thou heard thy brother praised either amongst men or women? Add to his praises, for so thou shalt have praise thyself also. But if thou overthrow the praise, first, thou hast spoken evil of thyself, having so acquired an ill character, and thou hast raised him the higher. When thou hearest or praised, become thou a partner in what is said; if not in thy life and virtue, yet still in rejoicing over his excellencies. Hath such an one praised? Do thou too admire; so shall he praise thee also as good and candid. Fear not, as though thou wast ruining thine own interest by thy praises of another; for this is rather the result of accusing him. For mankind is of a contentious spirit; and when it sees thee speaking ill of anyone, it heaps on its praises, wishing to mortify by so doing; and it reprobates those that are accusers, both in its own mind and to others. Seest thou what disgrace we are the causes of to ourselves? how we destroy and rend the flock?

Let us at length be members of one another, let us become one body. Let him that is praised repudiate the praises, and transfer the encomium to his brother; and let him that hears another praised feel pleasure to himself. If we thus come together ourselves, we shall also draw unto ourselves the Head; but if we live parted from each other, we shall also put from us the aid which comes from Thence; and when that is put aside, the body will receive great damage, not being bound together from above. That this may not happen let us, banishing ill will and envy, and despising what the many think of us, embrace love and concord. For thus shall we obtain both the present good things and those to come; whereunto may we all attain, through the grace and love towards mankind of our Lord Jesus Christ, with Whom to the Father together with the Holy Spirit be glory, might, honor, both now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.